

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2018

The Honorable Mark Green
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Green:

As Members of Congress committed to effective foreign assistance and gender equality, we write to urge the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to ensure that gender equality and women and girls' empowerment is prioritized in the Journey to Self-Reliance for partner countries.

We support US foreign assistance goals of helping countries to meet their own development needs so that they can deliver for their people, engage in the global economy, and become stronger partners for the United States. As USAID considers transitioning our foreign assistance in some countries, we must ensure that the most vulnerable groups—women and girls—are not being left behind. We know that stable, prosperous countries – the ones that are the strongest partners to the U.S. in today's challenging world – have invested in empowering women and girls. A 2015 McKinsey Global Institute study found that under a “full potential” scenario in which women play an identical role in labor markets to that of men, as much as \$28 trillion, or 26%, could be added to global annual GDP by 2025.” The evidence is strong on the benefits of and return on investment for gender equality and empowering women and girls.

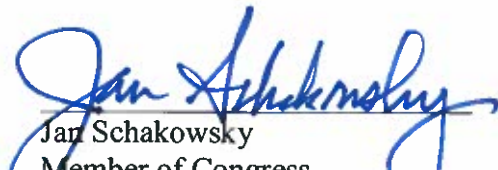
We recommend that gender equality and women and girls' empowerment are included as a core part of the USAID Transformation process. Specifically, we recommend using multiple gender equality metrics and strengthening the use of data disaggregated by age and sex to better understand the country's capacity and commitment. We also recommend maintaining USAID's established terminology, robust gender-related policies, strategies, and programming while ensuring there is sufficient staff capacity and expertise for gender mainstreaming of USAID's policies and programs. Finally, it is vital that efforts on procurement reform translate the institutional commitment to gender equality into rigorous, effective programs in every sector – from economic growth to education to peace and security – that reduce gender inequality.


This is a pivotal time in the world, and it is critical that the United States continues to be a leader on gender equality and invests in accelerating progress for gender equality as a cornerstone for driving progress around the world. Thank you for your ongoing leadership to elevate important evidence-based, gender-focused programs while ensuring USAID's whole-of-girl approach to mainstreaming gender in the agency. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,


Grace Meng
Member of Congress

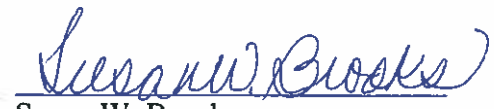

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